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STATE FOR EAP/MLS, OES/ETC (ROWENA WATSON)

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SUBJECT: VIETNAM'S PREPARATIONS FOR CITES COP 14

REF: STATE 59536

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. On May 9, ESTHOFF met with Nature Conservation Expert of Vietnam CITES Management Office in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) Ms. Ha Thi Tuyet Nga to discuss Vietnam's positions on Document 52 of the 14th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP 14) per reftel. The Government of Vietnam (GVN) has not determined their official delegation. Ms. Nga anticipates that the delegation will be led by MARD Vice Minister Hua Duc Nhi. Since the delegation has not been named and therefore has not formed an official opinion, Ms. Nga expressed a "personal view" on Document 52. She stated that if the Government of China (GOC) were to propose at COP 14 that CITES allow the registration of tiger farms for commercial purposes and if the proposed captive breeding programs met the conditions set in the Convention, the GVN would likely support such a proposal. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On May 9, ESTHOFF met with Nature Conservation Expert of Vietnam CITES Management Office in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) Ms. Ha Thi Tuyet Nga to discuss Vietnam's positions on Document 52 of the 14th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP 14) per reftel. The Government of Vietnam (GVN) has not determined their official delegation. Ms. Nga anticipates that the delegation will comprise four MARD/CITES experts and two scientists and that MARD Vice Minister Hua Duc Nhi will attend the ministerial-level meeting.

¶3. (SBU) According to Ms. Nga, once the delegates have been named, they will study and discuss documents to be presented at COP 14. The GVN delegation expects to have its official position on documents and proposals approximately one week before the Conference. Ms. Nga believes that the GVN delegation will not make a presentation on Document 52, but does plan to make a presentation on Enforcement.

¶4. (SBU) While hesitant to express an official position on Document 52, Ms. Nga was familiar with the document and appeared knowledgeable. Ms. Nga stated that if the GOC were to propose at COP 14 that CITES allow the registration of tiger farms for commercial purposes and if the proposed captive breeding programs met the conditions set in the Convention, the GVN would likely support such a proposal.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: MARD's CITES office appears hesitant to provide official comment on the probable Chinese proposal, which is likely because they have not yet consulted with the GOC. A separate, senior official in MARD's CITES office expressed to ESTHOFF a reluctance to the concept of captive breeding. Nevertheless, the GVN appears to be forming a position that would support China should they make a proposal to allow captive breeding of tigers for commercial purposes. END COMMENT.

MARINE